

Message Text

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LIMDIS

FOL REPEAT OF VIENTIANE 3952 TO SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK CINCPAC

JUN 3

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3952

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

BANGKOK ALSO FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR,

SUBJECT: HABIB CALL ON PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 2 ACCOMPANIED BY CHARGE AND EMBOFF. SOUVANNA HAD A NOTE TAKER PRESENT. THE CONVERSATION WAS TYPICALLY SOUVANNA, REFLECTING HIS LACK OF TOUCH WITH REALITY AND HIS ACCEPTANCE OF LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT VIEWS. HE APPEAR IN GOOD HEALTH.

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2. ON INCIDENTS DIRECTED AGAINST U.S. MISSION, SOUVANNA BLAMED "EXCITED YOUNG PEOPLE" AND EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT ALL HAD BEEN "SETTLED AMICABLY." LATER WHEN HABIB POINTED OUT THAT A MOB HAD DESCENDED ON AMERICAN MISSION WHEN WE WERE QUITE PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE DISESTABLISHMENT OF USAID IN ORDERLY WAY, SOUVANNA SAID MOB ACTION HAD BEEN UNFORTUNATE BUT FOREIGN MINISTER HAD APOLOGIZED TO U.S. THE DEMONSTRATIONS HAD BEEN ANTI-USAID, NOT ANTI-U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD WANTED TO AVOID USE OF FORCE. HABIB EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT IN FUTURE OUR RELATIONS WOULD BE CONDUCTED IN A NORMAL AND ORDERLY FASHION AND ON A BASIS OF TRUST AND UNDERSTANDING.

3. SOUVANNA EMPHASIZED THROUGHOUT THAT IN HIS VIEW "NOTHING HAD CHANGED" IN LAO-AMERICAN RELATIONS. LAOS WANTED TO CONTINUE TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH AND TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. THE PATHET LAO HAD SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT A PROVISION FOR CONTINUING SUCH ASSISTANCE BE INCLUDED IN THE ACCORDS. FUTURE AID MUST, HOWEVER, BE DIRECT, WITH PERHAPS A FEW EXPERTS ASSIGNED TO SPECIFIC MINISTRIES OVERSEEING AGREED PROJECTS. IN OUR PREVIOUS ASSISTANCE, MUCH OF THE APPROPRIATED FUNDS HAD BEEN ABSORBED BY ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND THE SALARIES OF AMERICAN TECHNICIANS. HABIB REMINDED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT ANY FUTURE ASSISTANCE WOULD, OF COURSE, REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION AND BE SUBJECT TO LEGALLY REQUIRED VERIFICATION. SOUVANNA VOLUNTEERED VIEW THAT AID RENEGOTIATION COULD TAKE PLACE IN VIENTIANE OR IN WASHINGTON.

4. THE CHARGE RAISED TWO PROBLEMS WHICH HAD ARISEN IN TALKS ON THE DISSOLUTION OF USAID WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE THAT VERY MORNING: A) THE INTRODUCTION BY THE LAO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SUBJECT OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE; AND B) THE LAO REPRESENTATIVES' INSISTENCE ON GOING INTO SUCH DETAILS THAT IT WOULD BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET THE JUNE 30 DEADLINE. SOUVANNA AGREED AND SAID HE WOULD ISSUE APPROPRIATE DIRECTIVES.

5. ON THE FUTURE OF LAOS, SOUVANNA SAID THAT THERE HAD
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BEEN NO REAL CHANGE IN LAOS. THERE HAD BEEN, HOWEVER, AND EVOLUTION OF ATTITUDES. THE COUNTRY NO LONGER WANTED TO RETAIN THE WAYS OF THE PAST. NOW THAT THE WAR WAS OVER, PEOPLE COULD EXPRESS THEMSELVES. THERE HAD BEEN AN EXPLOSION AND THOSE WITH TROUBLED CONSCIENCES HAD FLED. SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK, FOR INSTANCE, HAD NEVER COOPERATED WITH HIS LPF SECRETARY OF STATE (KHAMOUANE BOUPHA), ALTHOUGH, "WE LAO HAD NO REASONS FOR SECRETS

BETWEEN US." SISOUK HAD NEVER UNDERSTOOD THIS. IN THE NEW SITUATION, SOUVANNA HAD ORDERED THAT THE FORCES OF THE TWO SIDES COLLABORATE. "I HAVE TOLD KHAMOUANE AND PHOUMI TO GET RID OF UNDESIRABLES IN THE MILITARY FORCES AND TO INTEGRATE THE TWO FORCES. I HAVE ALSO ASKED THAT PHOUMI BRING CIVILIAN OFFICIALS FROM SAM NEUA AND PLACE THEM IN OUR ADMINISTRATION HERE...THE PRESS SAYS THAT THE PATHET LAO ARE TAKING OVER. IT'S NOT TRUE. THEY DON'T EVEN WANT TO...THEY RESPECT THE KING. THEY NEVER FORMED A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT AT SAM NEUA...PERHAPS IN FIVE OR SIX YEARS LAOS WILL BE COMMUNIST, BUT THEY ARE REASONABLE AND NATIONALISTS. THEY RESPECT OUR MONARCHY AND THERE WILL BE NO DICTATORSHIP."

6. HABIB TOLD SOAVANNA THAT BECAUSE OF RECENT EVENTS, OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON WERE NECESSARILY REEXAMINING AMERICA'S RELATIONS WITH LAOS. HE WOULD, OF COURSE, PRESENT THE PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS TO THEM AND HE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO PRESENT A POSITIVE PICTURE. SOUVANNA STATED THAT THE RECENT OUTBURST HAD BEEN SPONTANEOUS, BUT HE REITERATED THAT IT HAD BEEN DIRECTED AGAINST USAID, NOT THE U.S.
CHAPMAN UNQTE MAW

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